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ABSTRACT

Nearly 1.5 million children are living with and being raised by their grandparents. The AARP Grandparent Information Center met with five groups of children in the spring of 1996 to gather their thoughts and quotations on what it feels like to live with their grandparents. Fifteen drawings were also selected for inclusion. The children's quotations and pictures are presented in these sections: (1) "What Grandchildren Have to Say about Living with My Grandparents"; (2) "Things That Make Me Happy in the Morning"; (3) "The People Who Love Me"; (4) "Trust and Trusting"; (5) "Feeling Sad and Feeling Better"; (6) "Wishing and Wishing for Things"; (7) "Big Numbers and How Old Is Old?"; (8) "What Grandmas and Grandpas Do Best"; (9) "Giving Grown-Ups (and Adults) Advice"; (10) "Helping Other Children Who Are Going to Live with Their Grandparents"; (11) "Being Special"; (12) "Living Other Places...Not Living with Your Grandparents"; and (13) "Special for Grandma or Grandpa." (EV)

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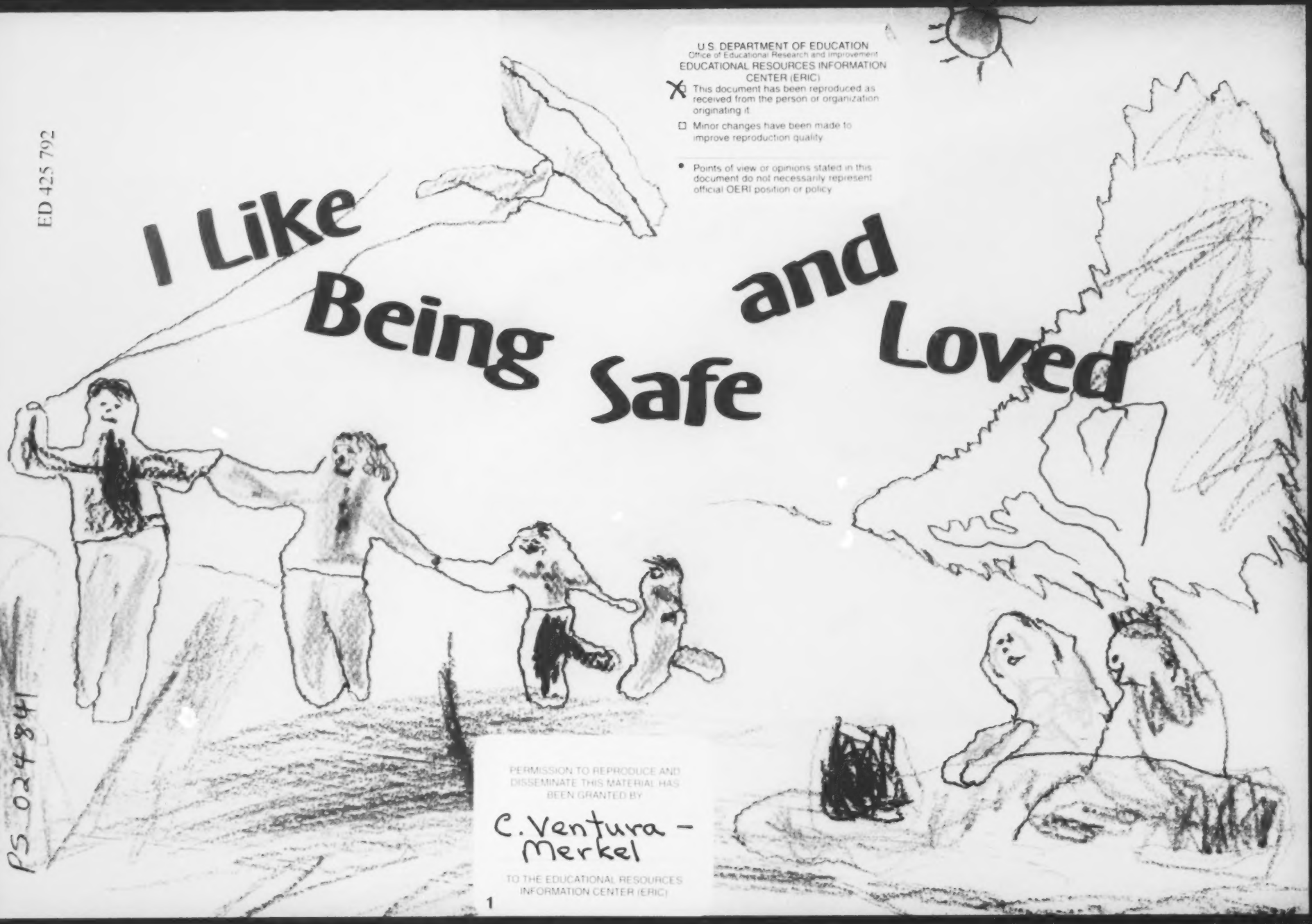
I Like Being Safe and Loved



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My Grandma Always Says...
If I Take Care Of My Plant... It Will Grow Like Me.

I Like Being Safe and Loved

Words and Pictures on Life with Grandma and Grandpa from Children Being Raised by Their Grandparents

Compiled by
Renee S. Woodworth
Mary Fron

A publication of the
AARP Grandparent Information Center
A.A.R.P. Foundation
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AARP

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Introduction...

Nearly one and one half million children are living with and being raised by their grandparents. They are not living with their birth parents and many have no contact with them. Life for these children is at the same time very different and just the same as for other children. The AARP Grandparent Information Center of the A.A.R.P. Foundation wants to give these grandchildren an opportunity to speak to you and also express their visions of life.

The AARP Grandparent Information Center, working with Mary Fron (a consultant), took on the task of pulling together a book of quotations about life with grandma and grandpa from grandchildren being raised by their grandparents. This project was supported, in part, by a grant from the Freddie Mac Foundation, without which it would not have been possible. We thank the Freddie Mac Foundation for helping us give these grandchildren a voice!

It was our pleasure to meet with five groups of children, nearly fifty (50) grandchildren in total, during the spring of 1996. These group sessions were held in: Lincoln, Nebraska; Kansas City, Missouri; Grand Rapids, Michigan; Hibbing, Minnesota; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The sites were chosen for their diversity of location and populations. They provided us with both rural and urban settings and a variety of family backgrounds.

We explained to the children that more than one million children are being raised by their grandparents and that this number is increasing every day. We further explained that this was their opportunity to tell America what it feels like to live with their grandparents; what they liked about it and what their hopes for the future include.

Each grandchild's comment is identified by their first name and age. The grandchildren were completely free to participate or to remain a non-participant in the group sessions. Their grandparents and relatives were advised of the type of questions we would be asking the children and of their right to privacy. The cooperation of the grandparents, group leaders and especially the grandchildren, made this publication possible. The grandchildren wrote this booklet; we only collected their thoughts on tape and transcribed them onto paper.

To truly make the booklet a reflection of the grandchildren's vision, the Center held an art contest in the spring of 1996, asking grandchildren who were being raised by their grandparents to submit drawings depicting life with grandma and grandpa. Ninety-five grandchildren submitted pictures. The youngest entrant was three years old and the oldest was thirteen years of age.

Fifteen drawings were selected for inclusion in the booklet, including the cover art. (See the next section for more information about the cover artist.) The selections were based on the originality of the artwork, age-appropriate quality, reproduction capability, and relevance to living with grandma and grandpa. Those drawings not included in this booklet will be used, when appropriate, in future Center publications.

Many of the grandchildren included statements or stories with their drawings. These messages or explanations were considered part of the artwork and, while not reproduced in their own handwriting, have been printed with the artwork, with no changes in grammar or spelling. In fact, the booklet's title, *"My Grandma Always Says...If I Take Care Of My Plant...It Will Grow Like Me. I Like Being Safe and Loved,"* was paraphrased from the artwork submitted by Dalana, age 7. Dalana's drawing can be found in the section on *"Being Special."*

Center staff and our design team found it very difficult to select only fifteen drawings for the booklet. Everyone did a great job and we wish that all of the artwork could have been included. It was obvious that all the grandchildren are very talented and have a keen sense of life and living.

Each and every one of the children who submitted a drawing (or participated in the group sessions) will get a copy of this booklet and a letter of appreciation from the Center. Center staff would also like to personally thank the grandchildren for sharing their visions and thank their grandparents for encouraging and allowing their participation in the art contest and the group sessions.

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About the Cover Artist...

Christina Maria Mazza is our cover artist. She lives in Maryland and was four and a half years old when she submitted her drawing, turning five on June 15th. This is how her Aunt Guilia describes Christina:

"Christina is a bright, expressive and inquisitive child. She enjoys life and is fun-loving and free-spirited. Christina has lived with her maternal grandparents since she was born. Although her birth parents are not involved in her life directly, Christina has been surrounded with a great deal of extended family.

As she approaches her fifth birthday in a couple of weeks, Christina is anxiously awaiting her special day. On that day, Christina will celebrate with close family and friends in a traditional "Italian dinner" at Nonno and Nonna's (grandpa and grandma's) house.

Christina adores her nonna, and idolizes her nonno. She is graced by their presence on a daily basis, and their love for her is unmeasureable.

Christina's picture depicts a typical Sunday afternoon at Nonno and Nonna's house—playing outdoors with her cousins, and experiencing life very innocently. Christina is an inspiration to us all. She has brought lots of love and laughter to her family. A new-beginning for us all, especially my mom and dad.

I wish her luck."

Aunt Guilia

Preface...

As my introduction to this booklet, I would like to share a story about our first group session with the grandchildren. We had prepared all the material (the moderator's guide, the consent forms, the tape recorders) and obtained the necessary support from the grandparents to make these conversations possible. But as with all great and small plans the unexpected often provides the best insight.

And in that first session ... it began with a tongue. As anyone who has spent some time around children will tell you, sticking their tongues out at adults is a great pastime for many young children. It can be an act of defiance... one that children sometimes get away with. When the little girl in the front of the circle stuck her tongue out at Mary; Mary asked her what that was. She responded, "My tongue." Mary then asked, and "How many of those do you have?" The little girl said, "One," which seemed to be the right answer. What surprised both of us, however, was the reaction of another little girl who simply stated that this was not the right answer. The right answer ... "was three." And without missing a beat this little girl counted her three tongues by pointing to the tongue in her mouth and the tongues in each of her sneakers.

Both little girls were right. Neither were wrong. Their approach to and understanding of the question was based on what they knew to be true. They simply saw things differently. It was a great way to start our conversations with the children. It reminded us, and I hope it will remind the reader of this booklet, that it is not wise to assume we know all the answers, or that our reality is the only valid approach to life. We do not individually or collectively hold the only truth. There is usually more than one way to look at and understand any situation, including grandparent-headed families.

And this booklet asks that you listen to the children and look at their world as they see it... in their pictures.

Renee S. Woodworth
Project Coordinator
AARP Grandparent Information Center

Living with My Grandparents...

6

"She (Grandma) makes me happy. When I'm sick she makes me happy."
(Ashley, 7)

"She (Grandma) takes care of us and provides food for us."
(Dominique, 9)

"They give me candy."
(Fabianna, 6)

"She reads me a story when I go to bed. She kisses us good night, then the lights go out."
(Ashely, 7)

"Because I wanted to (live with her)."
(La Toya, 12)

"I get to stay out later."
(Shareena, 13)

"She is nice to me. She cooks me noodles, they are my favorite."
(Britteny, 7)

"She feeds me oodles and oodles, and she cooks me chicken pie."
(Cherrell, 5)

"I like my grandma because she buys me lots of nice things and it's fun to live with her when's really nice to me. I've lived with her for a long time, four or five years. Johnny lives with us. I'm the oldest. My sister is three. My grandpa lives with us, too."
(Corey, 8)

"I like it because it's lots of fun." *(Johnny, 5)*

"I have three sisters that all live with me and grandma. I have a bike. (When asked where the bike came from, Marissa answered, "The garage.") I kiss grandma. I play games with grandma especially, Mickey Mouse games."
(Marissa, 3)

"I love living with Gramma and Grapa. I love them. I like them alot. I like living with Gamma and Grapa. I will allways love them. I will take car of them.

Why I came and livd with Gramma and Grappa. I came and livd with Gramma and Grapa becous my mom and dad brok up and los tha mone but taey stil love chothr. I stil love mom and dad. I love them and Gramma and Grapa. the end"

Artist: Natasha, 6 years old.

"I live with grandma and grandpa was in jail and I don't want him to go to jail and it made me sad. And grandpa got out and went back in and will get out in a couple of days. I can take showers by myself, and I go to school." *(Linze, 5)*

"... that I have been made to feel special all my life." *(Denise, 15)*

"They take me roller skating and out for dinner, to the mall and the movies." *(Andrea, 6)*

"They're nice to me and they don't do very much spanking and they're not mean and they don't do bad things. My Mom and Dad did lots of mean things." *(Katie, 8)*

"Because I like it, it's fun." *(Bryan, 3)*

"She doesn't spank and she's nice. Grandpa does nice things for me." *(Ashley, 6)*

"Because they're nice to me and they love me." *(Nathan, 7)*

"We're a regular family just like everybody else." *(Sharron, 15)*

"I like living with my grandma because we go places like Great America. My picture (Tinisah submitted a drawing and it was not included in the booklet but we are able to include her thoughts about living with grandma) is about me and my grandma picking apples off Mrs. Gilard's apple tree. But I love my grandmother even though I do get mad at her. She's always looking out for me and I look out for her sometimes. But sometimes I'm at school getting my education. She's the greatest pack they come in so I love her a lot." *(Tinisha, 9)*

Artist: Jennifer, 4 years old

Things That Make Me Happy in the Morning...

"Sunlight." *(Laneisha, 11)*

"I'm happy in the morning because my clothes are set out for me." *(Ashley, 6)*

"I like going to school. I get my own clothes out and on in the morning,
I'm going to be an artist when I grow up." *(Dominique, 9)*

"I like the sun." *(Cherrell, 5)*

"I'm glad that I'm awake." *(Jessica, 7)*

"I get up and get dressed and catch the bus at 7:05. I get up at 6 o'clock.
I'm glad when I get up and make my bed and
do everything that I'm supposed to do.
I like morning better than midnight." *(Katie, 8)*

"The reason I like to get up in the morning is
my dad (grandpa) makes me waffles with syrup." *(Kyle, 8)*

"I am blessed with a nice home, caring grandparents
and people who love me." *(Denise, 15)*

"Playing outside." *(Mason, 4)*

"That it's a sunny day." *(Steven, 10)*

"The sun shining and the music from the birds."
(Nathan, 7)

The People That Love Me...

"My mom and dad (grandma and grandpa)." *(Kyle, 8)*

"My grandma and grandpa love me very much and I love them, too." *(Katie, 8)*

"Andrew doesn't love me. I fell off the dock and he watched me drowning and just laughed. I don't love Andrew. My sister went and got my mom to help me. Andrew is ten years old and is my cousin." *(Kyle, 8)*

"My grandma and pop-pop love me, and my daddy." *(Bahiyyah, 8)*

"My grandma and grandpa and my brother love me but he lives in a different place and I miss him." *(Jamie, 5)*

"My mom and dad; my dad lives far away and I miss him." *(Erin, 5)*

"My mom and dad and my grandpa and grandma." *(Ashley, 6)*

"My mom loves me." *(Allen, 4)*

"My grandma, my mom, my grandpa and all the people related to me." *(Joseph, 7)*

"My family loves me." *(Jessica, 7)*

"My cousins and my grandpa and my dad and my mom and my sister love me." *(Sunnybrooke, 9)*

"My grandparents and close family and friends." *(Denise, 15)*

"Ryan; he's my friend. He's a boy. Other people love me, too." *(Mason, 4)*

"My teacher and my brother loves me." *(Fabianna, 6)*

"My grandma loves me." *(Laneisha, 11)*

Artist: Dominique, 9 years old (and one of grandchildren interviewed for this booklet)

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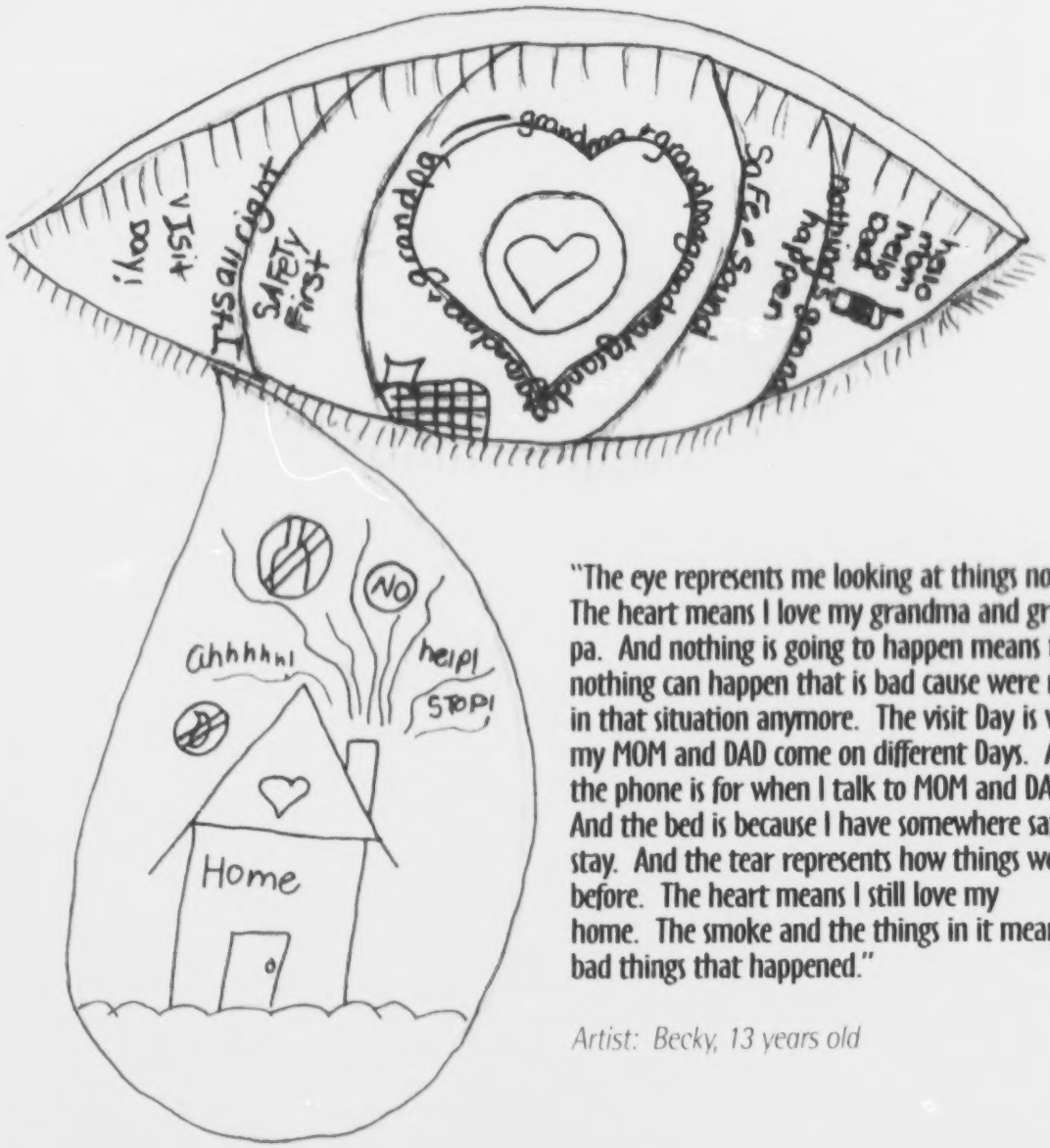
Trust and Trusting. . .

"Trust is when your mom or dad tell you to do something and they know you'll do it. I don't trust strangers or a boy named Cameo. And I don't trust myself." *(Dominique, 9)*

[Note: When asked why he doesn't trust himself, he answered, "Because I don't keep my word." When asked if he lies, he said, "No, I just don't keep my word."]

"I trust grandma and she says she'll give me things and she does. She gives me hugs and I give her hugs when she gives me things and keeps her promises. I trust my cousin and my grandpas because they let borrow Goosebumps books. I like them because they're kinda scary. I don't trust bad kids. I used to trust my mom and my dad but my mom said she'd get me a 'Talkboy,' but she hasn't gotten it for me yet, but she said she would." *(Johnny, 5)*



"The eye represents me looking at things now. The heart means I love my grandma and grandpa. And nothing is going to happen means that nothing can happen that is bad cause were not in that situation anymore. The visit Day is when my MOM and DAD come on different Days. And the phone is for when I talk to MOM and DAD. And the bed is because I have somewhere safe to stay. And the tear represents how things were before. The heart means I still love my home. The smoke and the things in it mean the bad things that happened."

Artist: Becky, 13 years old

"I trust my grandma because she does things for me and she's my best friend. I trust my sisters, too." *(Steven, 10)*

"I trust my papa and my grandma - but not my mommy and not my kitty either. Her begs for food. I have a dog, too." *(Mason, 4)*

"I don't trust nobody but myself." *(Tyrea, 17)*

"I don't trust nobody but my boyfriend." *(Sharron, 15)*

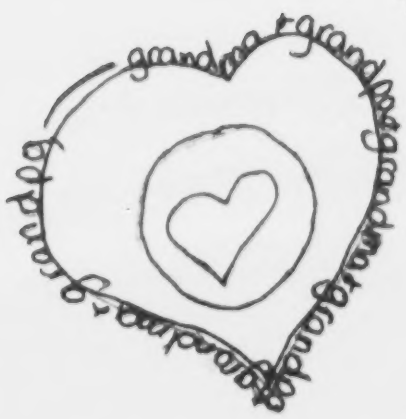
"I trust my family." *(Yolanda, 10)*

"I trust my grandma, my friends, my relatives, my sisters, my best friends, and Malcom X and Martin Luther King because they are my heroes." *(Dominique, 9)*

"I trust people, but not strangers or anybody I don't know." *(Yolanda, 10)*

"I trust my Uncle Ed." [Dominique tells Ashley she shouldn't trust Uncle Ed.]" *(Ashley, 7)*

"I trust my grandparents because they love me and care for me. They would never hurt me." *(Denise, 15)*



"God." *(Sunnybrooke, 9)*

"When you trust somebody and tell somebody to hold something, that they'll give it back to you when you want it." *(Yolanda, 10)*

"I think trust is when people say they're going to do something and they do it right away And they don't lie to you. They tell you the truth and are honest. I don't trust my 'real' mom and dad and the people on the bus, because they tell stories." *(Katie, 8)*

"There are kids on the bus that I don't trust either. I don't trust my sister either. She's mean. And I don't trust dogs I don't know." *(Kyle, 8)*

"I don't trust strangers." *(Jessica, 7)*

"I don't trust strangers either. And I don't want strangers in my house." *(Andrea, 6)*

Feeling Sad and Feeling Better...

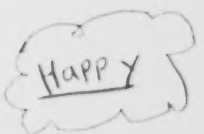
"Yeah. [I feel sad.] When I start thinking about my mom. She died on March 12, 1995 in a car accident. I can hear my mom's voice in the wind chime. I asked her if she got my note that I wrote her with my counselor, then we burned it, and she answered me in the wind chime in our yard. I asked her if she liked living in heaven and she said, yes."
(Steven, 10)

"I talk to my grandma and then I feel better." *(James, 5)*

"WHEN I AM SAD !!
The reason I don't like living here is because I don't get to see my mommy at all, and I haven't seen her since I was 3. I am now 9. I really miss her alot and I am sad about it."

"WHEN I AM HAPPY!
I like living here because I have a roof over my head, and clothing, my own bedroom, loving, and caring, and lots more! I also have a nice nanna. We have alot of things to do through the summer, like go to camps, go swimming, and go to trips, and other things. Mommy said if I lived with her, I probably wouldn't have these things to do in the summer."

Artist: Taressa, 9 years old.



"I talk to Jesus and that helps a lot." *(Ashley, 6)*

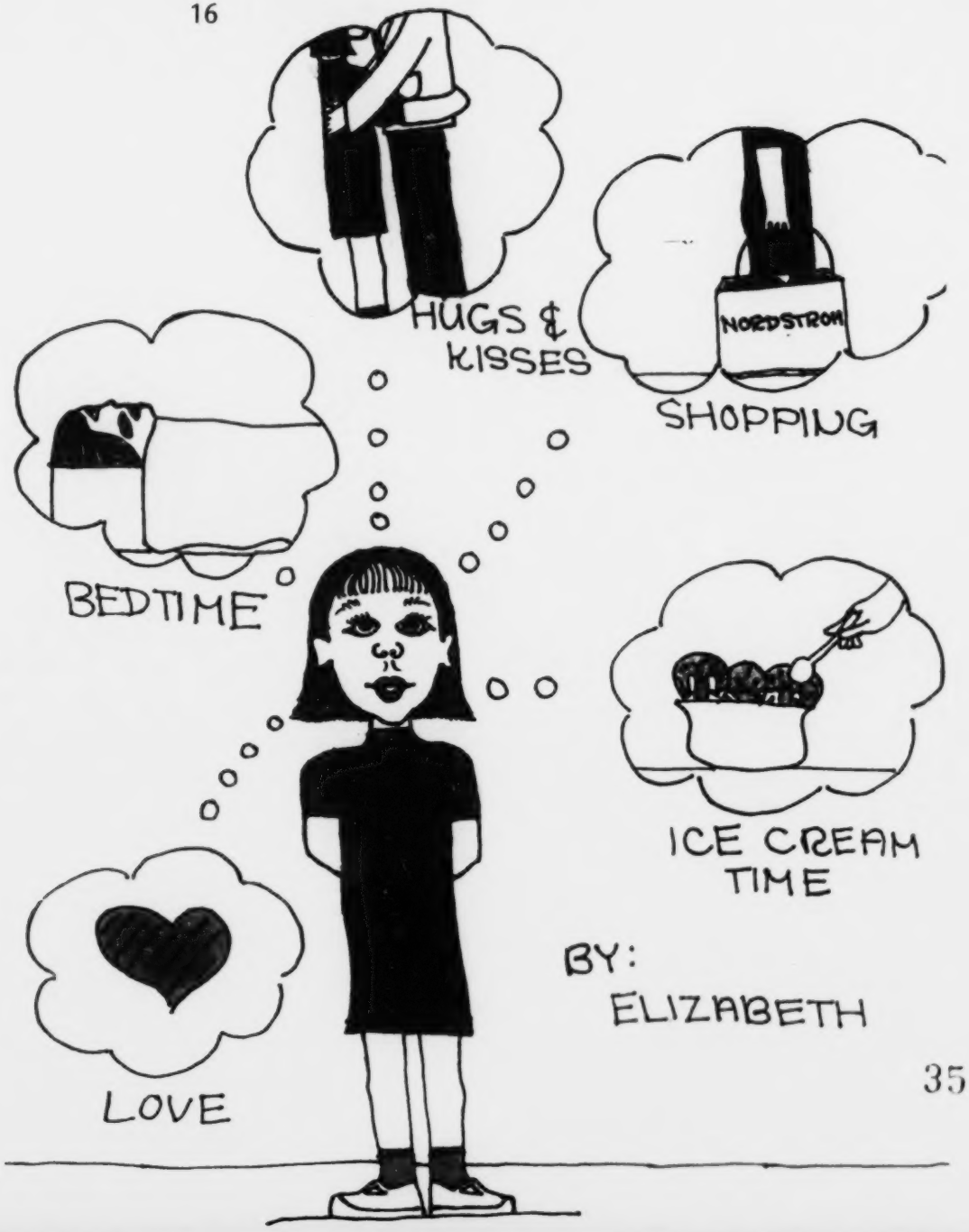
"I pray at night and tell God how I feel when I'm sad." *(Kyle, 8)*

"I have a counselor and somethings she makes me feel better. I don't like it when mom and dad [grandma and grandpa] start yelling at each other. It hurts my ears. *(Tiffany, 7)*

"Yelling hurts my hears really bad." *(Andrea, 6)*

"When my grandpa died two years ago." *(Dominique, 9)*

Wishing and Wishing for Things...



Artist: Elizabeth, 11 years old

"My uncle said he would bring me my dog. I wish he'd hurry." *(Erin, 5)*

"I just wish for more food for my kitty cat so he won't get hungry. Spunky eats dry food and then he throws it up when he goes upstairs. And I wish for a laser light. It's a magic light and it would be fun. I would shine it outside." *(James, 5)*

"I wish for a little rooster." *(Katie, 8)*

"Ummmmm ... coloring crayons." *(Bryan, 3)*

"I wish I was big and grown up. Grown up is when you're 35. One of my grandparents is 35 and the other is 20. Grandma's the one that's 20." (Ashley, 6)

"I wish for M's candy and for a crayon." *(Marissa, 3)*

"To see my mommy again." *(Steven, 10)*

"I'm not telling! Cuz then they won't come true!" *(Andrea, 6)*

"I don't have any wishes." *(Jessica, 7)*

"She has wishes, but she won't tell anyone, cuz they wouldn't come true." *(Andrea, 6)*

"What I wish for is to always stay young.
I don't ever want to get older. I don't ever want
to get older than I am now. I'd rather go backwards.
Grown-Ups don't have fun. I don't know what they'd do
for fun, but they don't have fun. I don't want to grow up."
(Kyle, 8)

Big Numbers and How Old Is Old?...

"1,380." *(Sunnybrooke, 9)*

"Infinity." *(Joseph, 7)*

"Infinity and one." *(Jessica, 7)*

" 1,000 children in my school are living with their grandparents." *(Mary who said this I think it was in MN)*

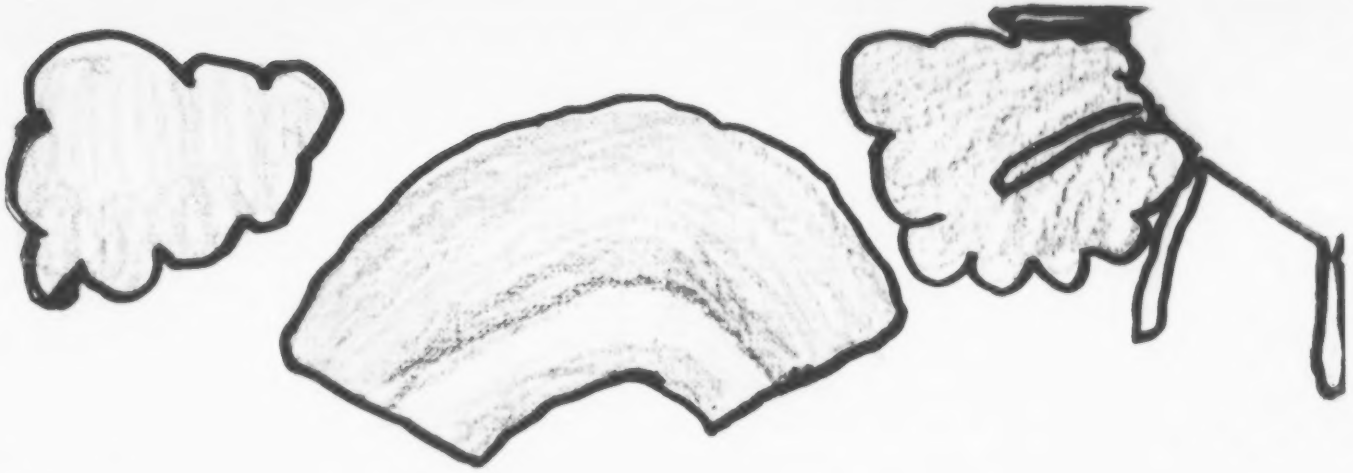
This conversation then moved into getting old .... Overall the children did not think of their grandparents as old, not any older than other grow-ups.

"One Hundred years old is 'old." *(Steven, 10)*

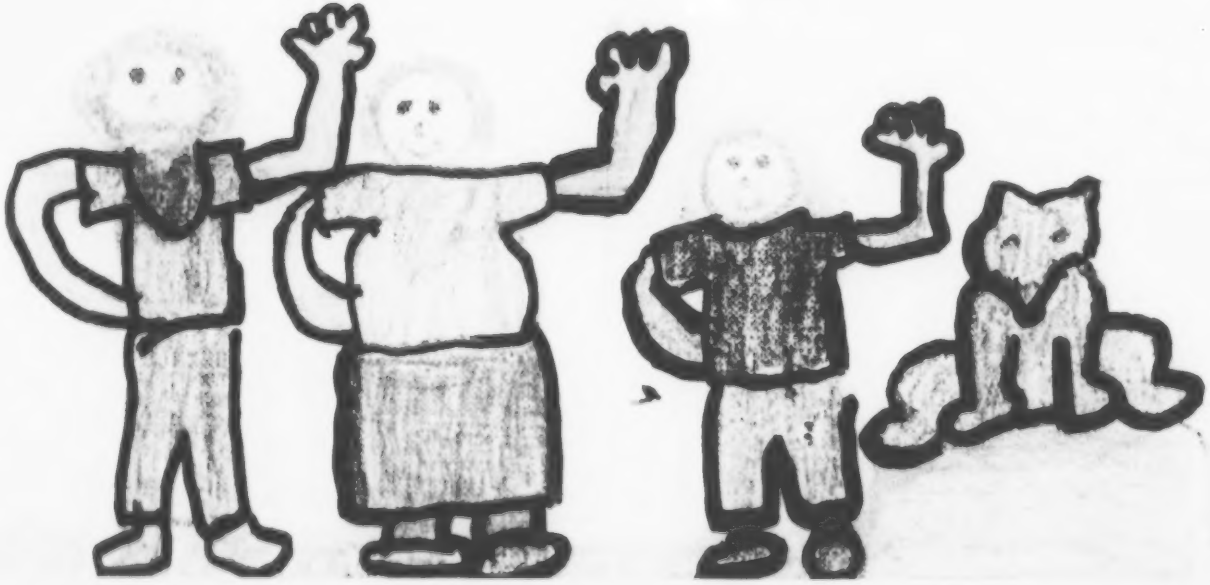
"My grandma is 27." *(Sunnybrooke, 9)*

"No, she isn't; she is 56." *(Joseph, 7)*

"My grandma is 3 and a half." *(Marissa, 3)*



Artist: Christy, 10 years old.



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What Grandmas and Grandpas Do Best...

Reach Out For Someone Who Loves You...

Artist: Sarah, 11 years old.

"Taking care of me." *(Linze, 5)*

"Sewing; she makes cuddly bears." *(Marissa, 3)*

"My grandma takes a lot of naps." *(Jessica, 7)*

"Teach kids what they need to be taught." *(Kyle, 8)*

"Take care of me." *(Erin, 5)*

"Grandma's best at sacrificing for my best interests." *(Denise, 15)*

"They cuddle children, and don't drink so the kids don't have a rough time,
and take care of them and hold them tight." *(Katie, 8)*

"Grandpa's best at being able to stand up for me when I can't do it." *(Denise, 15)*

"Mom's [grandma] best at taking care of me cuz she's a nurse, too.
My dad's [grandpa] best at fixing things that I break." *(Nathan, 7)*

"My grandpa's best at watching TV.
He like sports, mostly football." *(Joseph, 7)*

Giving Grown-ups (and Adults) Advice...

"Pay attention to the kids." *(Sunnybrooke, 9)*

"Don't drink." *(Tiffany, 7)*

"Take kids out to eat." *(Andrea, 6)*

"They shouldn't get drunk." *(Kyle, 8)*

"Stop smoking because I am allergic to it." *(Ashley, 6)*

"I told them to stop beating me and they did." *(James, 5)*

"To stop drinking and to stop being so mean to children." *(Katie, 8)*

"When people have guns and stuff and they shoot people and they don't have a reason to shoot them I think they should stop the violence and put the guns down." *(Dominique, 9)*

"I would tell Grown-Ups to stop doing drugs and care about their children." *(Nyjeeah, 8)*

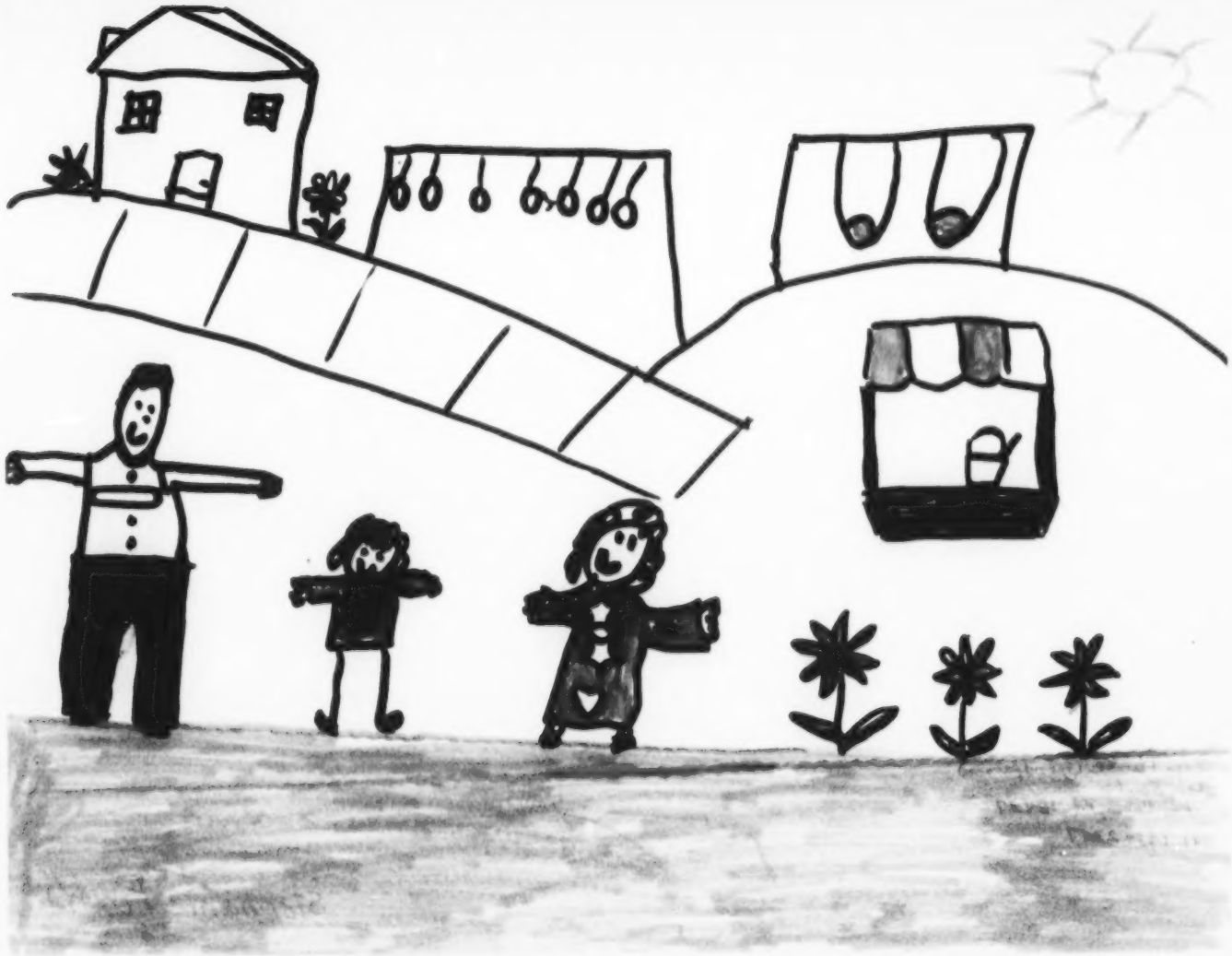
"Start caring about kids and stop caring about just yourselves." *(Tyesha, 11)*

"Not to fight." *(Corey, 8)*

"Don't yell at children. It hurts my ears." *(Jessica, 7)*

"Stop fighting." *(Johnny, 5)*

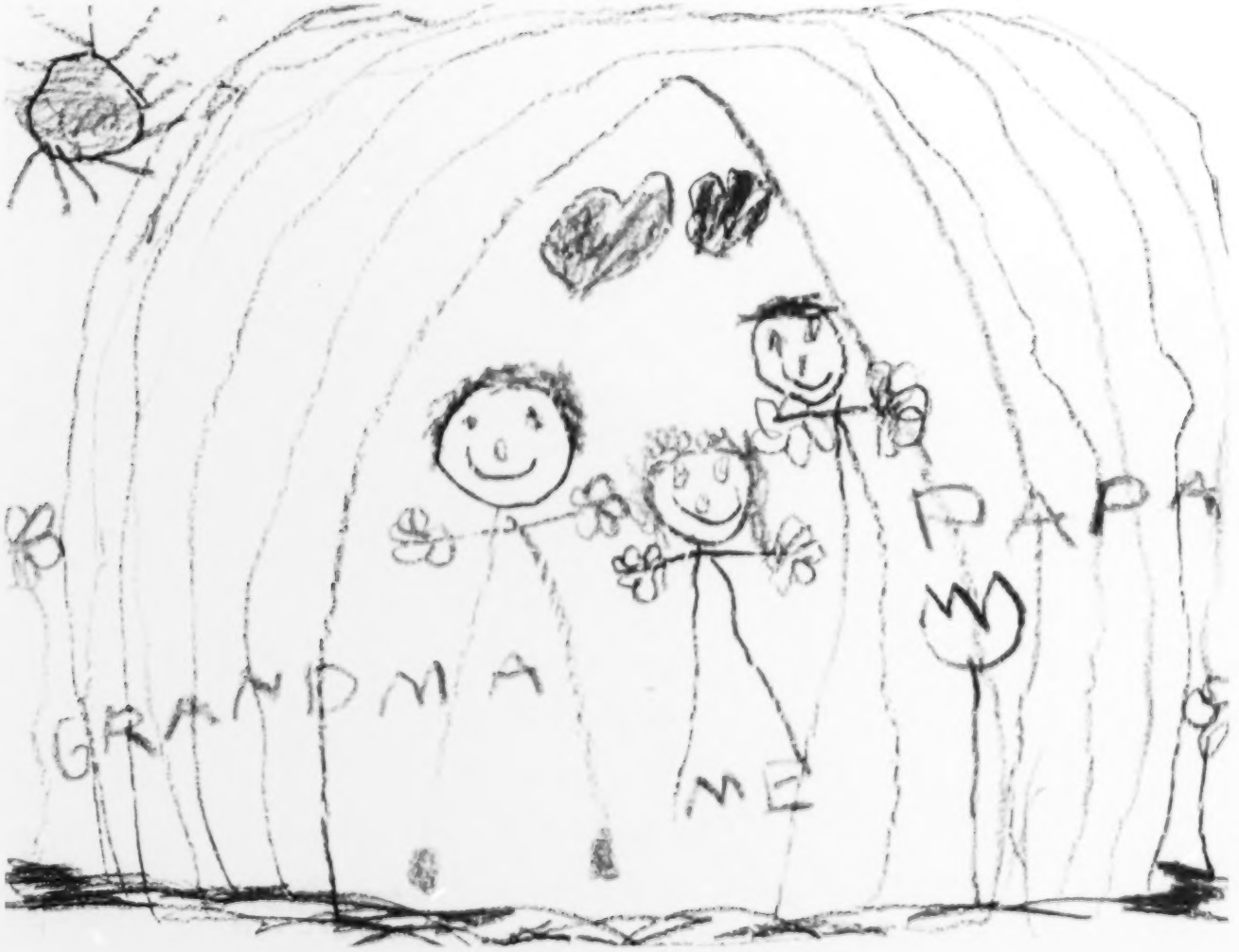
"They should cuddle their children, and don't drink so the kids don't have a rough time, and take care of them and hold them tight." *(Katie, 8)*



Artist:
Stephanie,
8 years old.

Helping Other Children Who Are Going to Live with Their Grandparents...

"I would tell them what your parents do is not your fault. You don't have to feel guilty or that you owe them anything. Children have rights. They should be able to call someone and be heard if they are unhappy and miserable."
(Denise, 15)



Artist: Taneisha, 5 years old.

"Don't expect to get as much living [with your grandparents or guardians]; because they can't buy you the same things parents can." *(Fatima, 17)*

"Go easy on grandma; she might get a stroke." *(Bahiyyah, 8)*

"I would tell them to be sure to watch where they ride their bikes. I would tell them to be sure to talk to the grandma and grandpa, and tell them what's going on." *(Katie, 8)*

"To make sure that they really like living with their grandmas and grandpas." *(Kyle, 8)*

"I would tell them if they don't like living with grandma, go back and live with their parents." *(Ashley, 6)*

"I would tell them I'm sad, too, because my mommy died." *(Steven, 10)*

"I would want them to know how important it is to keep safe. I feel safe now. I've lived with grandma for a big time." *(Ashley, 6)*

"Treat them right. Don't act bad. Listen to them and be happy that they love you and take care of you." *(Dominique, 9)*

"Treat them the way you want to be treated." *(Laneisha, 11)*

"I think your grandmas are nice persons and you should be nice to them." (Ashley, 7)

"Try not to cry. It's really nice to live with grandpa and grandma." (Jessica, 7)

"It's okay because you might be in trouble and they can help you." (Sunnybrooke, 9)

"You'll get to watch cartoons." (Maria, 4)

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Being Special...

"I like to pant (plant) flowers and watch them grow. My grandma always says If you Love and Care for your palant (plant) it will grow like me. I like being Safe and Loved."

Artist: Dalana, 7 years old.

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"Because I'm different than everybody else." *(Sunnybrooke, 9)*

"My name is Jessica and what makes me special is no one has my eyes, and no one else has my name." *(Jessica, 7)*

"Because I have a name from the Bible." *(Joseph, 7)*

"Because I like pizza with pepperoni." *(Maria, 4)*

"That I've got someone to take care of me. God gave me a grandma to love." *(Ashley, 7)*

"The thing that's special about me is that when I'm 15 or 16 I'm going to get myself
a Grand Am and sell some pictures
so we can buy my grandma a new house." *(Dominique, 9)*

"I think God is always in my heart. He takes care of me
and made me special." *(Fabianna, 6)*

"That my mommy loves me." *(Steven, 10)*

"I jumped out of a window right into my hoop,
but I didn't get hurt." *(Mason, 4)*

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Living Other Places...
Not Living with Your Grandparents...

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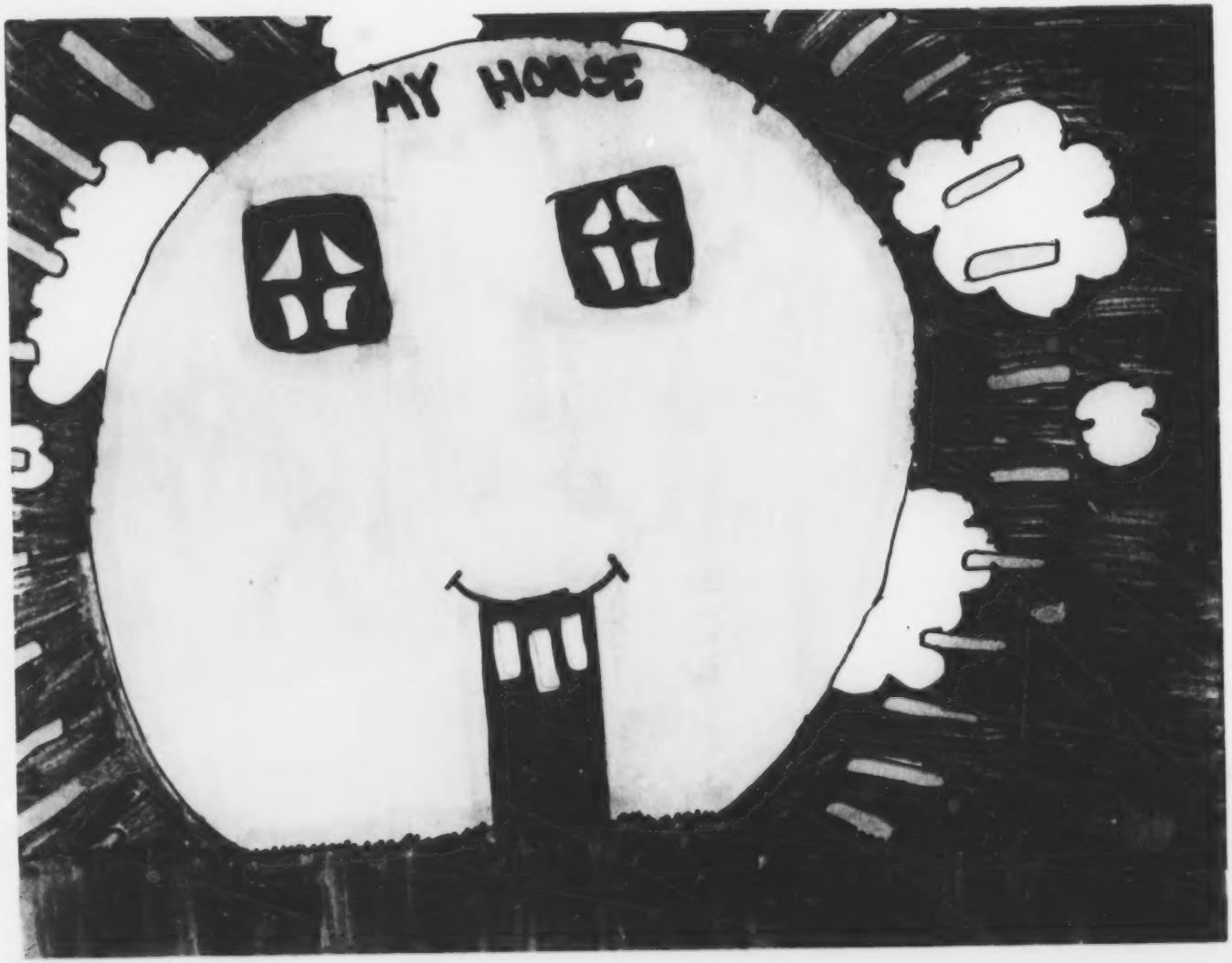

Artist: Karen, 9 years old.

"Nowhere! I wouldn't go nowhere but stay with them.
I wouldn't get out of their house because I love them so much.
Because I don't want to grow up!" *(Kyle, 8)*

"I'd live far and far in the country right next to her in my house. I'd build a house right next to them." *(Katie, 8)*

"Probably in a foster home." *(Sunnybrooke, 9)*

"I've lived in foster care. They put me in hot water and hurt me.
I would live with my aunt." *(Cherrell, 5)*

"Probably in the street." *(Steven, 10)*

Many of the children answered, "I don't know."

Special for Grandma or Grandpa...

"I love you and I'll take care of you and I'll always be there for you when you have needs and I won't let nobody hurt you; that she's [grandma] very special to me and when she dies, she'll always be in my heart." *(Dominique, 9)*

"That I love her and when she dies, she'll always be in my heart." *(Yolanda, 10)*

"I want to thank her for the stuff she gave me (like the Pocahontas underwear) when she dies, she'll always be in my life." *(Fabianna, 6)*

Dear Grandma, everything is all Smiles with you around. You make my life all Smiles I dance when you are happy. Thank you for everything you do for me, and got me.
Love always

Artist: Jessica, 10 years old

I want to grow up and be the best I can be." *(Denise, 15)*

"I would like to give my aunt a party for giving me all the things I need." *(Tyesha, 17)*

"I would like to stop giving my grandma a hard time." *(Nyjeeah, 11)*

All the children wanted their caregivers to know how much they loved them.

Artist: Dylan, 7 years old.

(Special note from the grandmother:
"The children in my grandson's class were told a Ukrainian folk tale entitled "My Mother is the Most Beautiful Woman in the World." My grandson changed the title of his illustration of the story to "My Grandmother." It brought tears to my eyes and is indeed, something I shall treasure forever."

My Grandmother Is the Most Beautiful Woman in the World

About the Grandchildren...

The children who contributed to this booklet live with their grandparents for reasons such as parents' drug or alcohol abuse, unemployment, neglect, incarceration or educational opportunities.

Chelsea, age 2 years, has lived with her grandparents for less than one year and they have legal custody of her.

Porsha and Branden, age 3 and 2 years respectively, have lived with their grandparents for less than two years. The grandparents have an informal arrangement (no legal arrangement).

Christopher, age 4, and his brother, Logan who is 2, live with their grandmother, who has legal custody. They have been with her for over two years.

Jessica and Andra, ages 7 and 6, have been with their grandparents, who have legal guardianship of them, for over five years. Jessica participated from a distance at first, while Andrea was in the front row. Andrea looked for Jessica's support and guidance throughout the visit, and later Jessica joined us in the front as well.

Tiffany, age 7, participated eagerly. She has lived with her grandparents, who have temporary custody, for more than two years.

Sunnybrooke, Joseph and Maria, ages 9, 7, and 4 years respectively, have lived with their grandparents for less than one year. Sunnybrooke and Joseph are especially happy to be attending school and making friends.

Johnny and Corey, 5 and 8 years respectively, have lived with their grandparents for less than one year. They have legal guardianship of the boys.

Steven, age 10, has lived with his grandparents for about 18 months. He has three sisters who also live with their grandparents and the arrangement is informal, yet permanent.

Mason, age 4, has lived with his younger brother and grandmother on and off for the last few years. The arrangement is informal.

Linze, age, 5, lives with her grandmother and two siblings. Grandma has legal guardianship of the children.

Marissa, age 3 1/2, lives with her grandparents, who have legal guardianship.

Laneisha, age 11, lives with her grandmother, who has legal guardianship. Laneisha claims her best subject in school is math. Her cousin, **Yolanda, age 10,** also lives with them.

Dominique, Ashley, and Fabianna, ages 9, 7 and 6 years respectively, all live with their great-grandmother who has legal guardianship of them. Dominique sees himself as the person responsible for his sisters, and now also his great-grandmother following the death of his great-grandfather two years ago.

Ashley and Bryan, ages 6 and 4 years respectively, live with their grandmother, who legally adopted the children one year ago.

Allen, age 4, lives with his grandparents, who have legally adopted him.

James, age 5, lives with his grandparents, who legally adopted him two years ago.

Katie and Kyle, twin 8 year olds, have lived with their grandparents since birth. Their grandfather/dad is a special man, having married their grandmother after she took on the care of the children.

Nathan, 7, has lived with his grandparents since birth. They legally adopted him three years ago.

AARP Grandparent Information Center

A.A.R.P. Foundation

601 E Street, NW • Washington, DC 20049

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